# THE AERONAUT.

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—An vos momenta putatis
Ulla dedisse mihi? — LUCAN.

Few are the moments that ye give to me.

To the AUTHORS of the AERONAUT.

"It is now more than half a century since I last attempted to convey my ideas to the public through the medium of an essayist on the manner in which I am treated by mankind. It was in a different country to the one in which I at present write, but one from which I now find all

around me deducing their origin.

"Perhaps I may not at present be so successful as I then was in depicting my situation. The hardships I have suffered have perhaps enfeebled me, & rendered me less capable of performing this duty. But the variety of new objects I now behold, may also have tended to scatter my thoughts, so that I hope you will make all proper allowance for my failure.

"My adventures of old I need not again mention. It is well known that many have treated me with respect ~~at~~ since I last wrote; but during my voyage to this country, I was perpetually discouraged & discountenanced. My presence was regarded as irksome, & I was soon treated as if I never existed. The gravity of my demeanor afforded food for ridicule, and the truths which I was anxious to impress upon my companions, were either not

attended to, or regarded as specious lies. I was offended by gambling, & profane swearing, perpetually. I however consoled myself by the reflection, that I might meet with a better treatment, when I arrived in America.

"I first landed in new England. The people here were so attached to me, as I soon found by experience, that they denied themselves many gratifications in order to do me honor. Many of these I must confess were unlawfully withheld; and the punishments for enjoying them were so rigorous, that I fear my presence became rather irksome. They at last however softened down, and I am now treated whenever I appear there with decent respect; my arrival is welcomed with complacency & joy, and every thing around me seems to smile with satisfaction & delight. My presence was always

regarded them as a season of seclusion from business; and so perfectly regulated are the inhabitants, that I always find them ready to receive me.

"I believe I am generally known at present throughout the United States. For many years however I was almost a total stranger in many parts. I could not find a single house to receive me, & men paged by me without a single trace of recognition. Even when my appearance was announced, they seemed totally ignorant how to treat me, and neglected me full as much as usual. When by degrees they began to learn my importance, they regarded me with suspicious eye, and only viewed me as one who came to interrupt their business or their pleasures. In the southern extremities of your country particularly, though by a few a corrupt & superstitious reverence was paid to me, yet by the great part

of those I met with I was treated with the most perfect unconcern imaginable. They even frequented the theatre and other places of public amusement full in my observation; and though a few huts were erected here & there for my wretched accommodation, yet I was scarcely ever visited, unless it was to crack a joke upon those who proclaimed my importance, or to revile my own behaviour, and the origin of my commission. And even in other parts where I am more esteemed, I have very often to lament the neglect in which I am held. The generality seem to consider me as a nuisance, while some of them totally break through any barrier of restraint, and strive to banish me forcibly from their presence. — What course of conduct can I pursue with men who thus neglect and despise me?

"In the country parts, I am rarely thought of. Now and then a few individuals assemble to do me reverence, but it is at long intervals, and often with evident reluctance. And while they are in my presence they seem to be anxious for the time of their departure to arrive, and go home with faces evidently more joyful than when they ~~first~~ came.

"In the cities, I am apparently much esteemed. As I am at present in New York, I will take this city for an example of the mode of treating one in all the cities, there being very little difference.

"When a stranger arrives in New-York, the first remark I hear is, how much I am revered. Every body appears to be paying court to me; and innumerable visits are paid to me in the superb edifices which public & private

munificence has erected for my reception in different parts of the city. The common-council have also issued several proclamations enjoining people the inhabitants to respect my presence. Were I to stay within doors, I should be in general well pleased. I find many attentively listening to the solemn truths I have to reveal, and deriving comfort, consolation, and instruction from the words which I utter. But even here, when I look around, I find a few giddy people whispering together upon some indifferent subject; in another place others I see either asleep, or gazing around in vacant inanity; the young men & women instead of listening to me are ogling each other, and many a darling belle comes into my presence only for the purpose of displaying her

fine person, & showy appearance. The consequence is, that my admonitions are disregarded, and public morals deteriorate.

"But when I go out into the street, I am looked at by many without a smile. Nay, they even seem to take advantage of my presence, and are more frivolous when I am near them than on other occasions. In Broadway, I am absolutely scouted. My ears are stunned with the most impertinent babble; and I have been several times very near being run over by the vast number of vehicles which are dashing along the streets in defiance of my precepts. In the evening, the rudeness with which I am treated is not to be borne; although even in 'the land of steady habits', I am not much attended to if I appear after dark. But here in New York, it seems as if every lane and alley had

poured forth its contents to mock at my presence. To be sure, in a large city like this, I must expect that it abounds in outrageous characters; but I nevertheless think that I am entitled by my age, my standing, my commission, & my respectability, to have even the dregs of society subservient to my control. And inconsistent as it may appear, If I announce my intention of seeing company in the evening, the place when I meet them is crowded out of all belief.

"I have thus, gentlemen, made a plain statement of my grievances. I have however on the other hand, many encouraging circumstances. Associations of men have been formed, whose exertions all tend to promote a respect for me. My importance is declared to all, & I find that even the wilderness & the waste welcome me sometimes to their bosom. There is also an

ancient volume, which I always carry with me, and which though neglected by too many, & ~~ill~~ by all those who neglect me, furnishes me at once with my authority & my instructions. This volume, I am glad to find, these pious & active individuals are endeavoring to spread to all. I find that wherever I go, I am treated in exact proportion to the knowledge of this book; indeed, no one can read it attentively, without being convinced of my importance, and of the necessity of paying that ~~due~~ reverence to me which my character, my dignity, and my office requires.

"If these exertions proceed, I have little doubt of my being soon able to command more respect. At present I am so often disgusted either at the rudeness or the indifference of many, that I am sometimes under apprehensions of falling into total

neglect, did I not remember, that my office is not yet to expire, & that I am certain of the reverence of a portion of the human race as long as I live. Did men look upon me as they should, they would delight in my presence, & rest from their toils in listening to me. They would be taught to forget the pains and evils of life, to live in harmony, to look forward to eternal happiness. As it is, by their continual neglect of me and of my precepts, they are only making for themselves a fearful retribution; they are going farther & farther from happiness, and are losing ground every moment of their existence. Though I am now so scorned & despised, yet a time shall come, when they will look back to their conduct with regret, while I shall

be removed to a happier scene, & room in eternal duration. Hoping that men will soon perceive more generally their duty towards me, I remain

"Your faithful friend

"SUNDAY."